

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR PORG UNSC LE IS
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON

REF: STATE 197468

1. DCM CALLED ON UN REP SAUNDERS NOON AUGUST 5 AND ORALLY CONVEYED TO HIM ESSENCE OF DEPT'S INSTRUCTIONS IN REFTTEL, PARTICULARLY DEPT'S DESIRE TO AVOID CONFUSION WHILE UNIFIL NEGOTIATORS ARE CONDUCTING NEGOTIATIONS ON THE GROUND IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

2. IN REPLY SAUNDERS BRIEFED DCM ON RESULTS OF CALL FORMER HAD JUST MADE ON BOUTROS, AS FOLLOWS: SAUNDERS GAVE BOUTROS A COPY OF BEGIN'S REPLY TO WALDHEIM. SAUNDERS ASKED BOUTROS IF HE WANTED TO COMMENT ON THE ISSUE OF PRACTICAL DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS ON THE GROUND, SUCH AS THE SAAD-HADDAD MEETING (JERUSALEM 2157). BOUTROS HAD NO COMMENT, BUT SAUNDERS SENSED A HARDENING OF THE GOL ATTI-

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TUDE TOWARD THAT SORT OF CONTACT. THE DAY BEFORE, WHEN SAUNDERS TOLD LEBANESE GHQ OF THE SAAD-HADDAD MEETING, ABDO HAD BEEN UNPLEASANTLY SURPRISED AND COMMENTED THAT WHILE SAAD IS AN EXCELLENT PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER, HE IS NOT A TRAINED POLITICAL NEGOTIATOR.

3. BOUTROS TOLD SAUNDERS THAT THE RESPONSE ONE GETS IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS DIFFERS WIDELY DEPENDING UPON THE LEVEL. AT

THE WEIZMAN LEVEL, THERE WAS A GOOD DEAL OF COOPERATION; HOWEVER, WITH THE ISRAELI OFFICERS ON THE GROUND, THERE WAS A VERY DIFFERENT ATTITUDE. THUS, HOW WELL NEGOTIATIONS GO DEPENDS ON TO WHOM ONE IS TALKING.

4. ON THE BASIS OF A PHONE CONVERSATION WITH URQUHART, SAUNDERS TOLD BOUTROS THAT DISCUSSIONS ARE PROCEEDING VIGOROUSLY IN NEW YORK WITH ENORMOUS HELP FROM USG, AND THAT THERE ARE SOME ELEMENTS OF OPTIMISM IN THE ATMOSPHERE. BOUTROS REPLIED THAT HIS OWN VIEW WAS PESSIMISTIC.

5. BOUTROS COMMENTED TO DCM AND BOUTROS AND UNIFIL SHARE THE FEELING THAT THERE IS A DANGEROUS AMBIVALENCE BETWEEN THE ISRAELIS IN THE FIELD AND SENIOR GOI OFFICIALS. THERE IS THUS A QUESTION AS TO HOW FAR UNIFIL-SPONSORED NEGOTIATIONS CAN BE CARRIED FORWARD IN THE FIELD. HE ADDED THAT WE SHOULD SOON KNOW MORE SINCE CUQ IS HOLDING DISCUSSIONS AT YARZE WITH GENERAL KHOURY TODAY. WHEN SAUNDERS TALKED TO ERSKINE THIS MORNING, LATTER REPORTED THAT HADDAD WAS STILL FIRM AND UNCOOPERATIVE.

6. RETURNING TO BRIEFING ON HIS CONVERSATION TODAY WITH BOUTROS, SAUNDERS TOLD DCM HE HAD ASKED BOUTROS WHETHER THE GOL HAS MADE A CHOICE AMONG THE VARIOUS THEORETICAL ALTERNATIVES OPEN TO IT RE THE UNIT AT KAWKABA. BOUTROS SAID GOL HAD NOT. SAUNDERS TOLD DCM HE ASSUMES THAT GOL CONTINUES TO STUDY ALTERNATIVE OF ATTEMPTING TO GAIN PASSAGE TO TIBNIN BY FORCE OF ARMS, BUT THAT THIS WAS NOT
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RAISED IN BOUTROS' CONVERSATION WITH HIM.

7. CONTINUING BRIEFING, SAUNDERS SAID HE HAD ASKED BOUTROS IF THE GOL WAS PREPARED TO SEPARATE THE ISSUE OF HADDAD FROM THE REST OF THE PACKAGE. BOUTROS DID NOT ANSWER HIM SQUARELY, BUT IN A "ROUND-ABOUT" WAY GAVE SAUNDERS THE FEELING THAT IT MIGHT BE A POSSIBLE SOLUTION FOR THE GOL. HOWEVER, SAUNDERS COULD NOT SAY THIS WITH ASSURANCE.

8. SAUNDERS THEN COMMENTED TO DCM THAT UNIFIL BY ITSELF COULD DISCUSS ON THE GROUND PRACTICAL QUESTIONS SUCH AS WHICH ROAD ONE USES, MILITARY TECHNIQUE OF RUNNING CONVOYS INCLUDING SIZE OF EACH SEGMENT, AND PRECAUTIONS REGARDING THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS. HOWEVER, IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW UNIFIL CAN NEGOTIATE ALONE WITHOUT HAVING THESE NEGOTIATIONS LINKED TO HIGHER LEVEL NEGOTIATIONS. THE LINK IS NEEDED BECAUSE HADDAD IS A CREATURE OF THE ISRAELIS, AND ACCORDING TO UN EXPERIENCE HE HAS LITTLE POWER OR POSITION ON POLITICAL MATTERS. THEREFORE, UNLESS THERE IS "EXTREMELY HEAVY HIGH-LEVEL PRESSURE" EXERTED ON THE GOI, WE WILL NOT GET ANYWHERE IN THE SOUTH LEBANON PROBLEM. THE GOL IS UNHAPPY ABOUT THE DIRECT SAAD-HADDAD NEGOTIATIONS. SAUNDERS COULD NOT SEE A SITUATION IN WHICH GOL WOULD ENTRUST TO ERSKINE OR CUQ SUCH "EXTREMELY POLITI-

CALLY TENSE" NEGOTIATIONS AS THOSE OVER HADDAD'S FUTURE. FROM
HADDAD'S POINT OF VIEW, THE PRACTICAL MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS BEING
DISCUSSED INEVITABLY CONCERN HIS OWN NECK. SAUNDERS CONCLUDED
BY SUGGESTING THAT IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THERE BE NO LET-UP
IN HIGH-LEVEL NEGOTIATING PRESSURE ON THE GOI.
PARKER

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